Gone, But Not Forgotten

PRINCE EDWARD HOTEL, formerly The Randolph House and Morton's Tavern, was handsome in its classic lines and beautifully appointed with medium green awnings installed by Watkins Awning & Sign Company.

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LANDMARK DEMOLISHED—Cracking walls, sagging floors, required demolition of this historic hostelry, in March 1964, during which time it was brought indirectly into the community's news clears, were noted.

of 1904, by her children, Mrs. Harriet Booker Lamb and Elliott Read Booker, Jr., descendants of the wartime proprietor.

The site provides the handsome furnishings of a guest room in the Lodgewood Colonial Antiques Shop, Longwood Drive, where the historic objects may be inspected.

In September, 1963, Joseph E. Wood, Farmville contractor, purchased the hotel property from the Moores. A month later, Wood announced that considerable remodeling would be undertaken. He said plans called for retaining the brick walls and antebellum wrought iron balcony.

A community, fascinated by the bold undertaking, watched as the work got under the Randolph House. . . Wood had returned to the former name, rebuilding parties, the social activities which once centered there.

What a sad time was had at the old hostelry, in March 1964, when the remodeling was halted. Investigation revealed: what a sad time was had at the old hotel yesterday, when the remodeling was halted. Investigation revealed: the old hotel yesterday, with a large section of the rear wall collapsed as foundation and floor supports gave way, and the entire structure was condemned by building inspectors.

The crumbling walls were shored with timbers, bricks, mortar, and lumber. A ladder was erected to the second floor, where the remaining walls seemed most likely to hold off for a week; the entire structure must be removed! Safety permitted no further delay.

The demolition crews and builders were moved in. Tons of rubble, consisting of jumbled timbers, bricks, mortar, and lumber, filled the basement. All that remained of the once-proud hostelry was a pile of rubble.

The crumble process of this structure as a reminder of a community's past, a symbol of the hospitality of the nation's march to national maturity; and the now-abruptly-halted remodeling of this once-proud hotel.

They were presented to the Alumnae Association as a memorial to the late Mrs. Jessie Wallcourt Booker, Longwood Class of 1904.

General Grant received the reply early on the following morning, April 8, and dispatched his second note to General Lee from the same place. It read:

"Your note of last evening, in reply to mine of the same date, asking the condition on which Lieutenant General Longstreet, Virginia, is just received. In reply, I would say that, peace being my great desire, there is nothing in the terms I propose to assent to that the men and officers surrendered, shall be disqualified for taking up arms against their Government, or be subject to any other liability than such parties may be liable to from non-participation in the rebellion, to the extent of the action of the United States until property exchanged. I will meet you, or will designate officers to meet any officers you may name for the same purpose, at any time agreeable to you, for the purpose of arranging definitely the terms upon which the surrender of the army of Northern Virginia will be received."

The correspondence following, which culminated in the surrender the next day at the two commanders met in the McLean House in Appomattox Court House, is described by Grant as an interesting part of the history of the last days of the Confederacy.

The hotel was a large, two-storied frame building with a large section in the rear. The refurbished hostelry was formally opened as the "Prince Edward Hotel" on August 1, 1907, by Mrs. Lucy Read Booker, wife of the proprietor.

With authentication from Walter Barton, the hotel's first guest was a traveling salesman who had encountered irresistible delays in the railroad schedules.

Through the succeeding eighteen months or two years and we had no liberty or furlough. Our men and officers suffered much for want of food, but their fortitude in bearing hardships without a murmur reflected the highest honor upon them. Our hospitals were filled with the wounded, and our dead were buried on almost every battlefield between the Rapidan and the James. Our losses in battle were severe, and many thousands sank to rest in the trenches before the spring campaign opened. Nothing but the unsurpassed courage of our troops, and the confidence they had in their commanders, could have induced them to endure what they did through the winter of 1864-5. Their situation was one of exposure, hardship, and peril. Besides the dangers of battle, they were subjected to the chances of the explosion of shells in the trenches, and to the fire of sharpshooters, who were always on the alert for a head. Yet, amid all these trials, the troops preserved their morale, and entered upon the campaign with high hopes and courage.

When, on April 7, 1865, General Grant received Lee's letter asking the terms on which General Robert E. Lee the first of the historic "afternoon of blood" notes from Confederate Headquarters to Union commander's headquarters at Farmville, the hostelry had already entered well over half a century of service as tavern, inn and hotel.

Mr. and Mrs. William H. Moore, Jr., who purchased the property in 1962, have had compiled extract notes of a "Bee of deeds" tracing the ownership backward from them to the Town of Farmville deeded three half-acre lots, comprising the present site, to Joseph Meissner for 84 pounds and 10 shillings.

Farmville had been laid out only the year before on land provided by Judith Walker, daughter of Peter Jefferson and prominent pioneer Randolph family. The property transfer was conditioned on the erection of a courthouse, a prison and stocks.

By 1804, the tavern of William A. Morton, erected on the easternmost portion of the lots, original tavern stood until 1864 and was the oldest brick building in Prince Edward County. It added to and its services were offered the public as "The Randolph House."

Colonel Richard Anderson of Northern Virginia, was the wartime proprietor. General Lee rested briefly at the hotel after his meeting with Secretary of War John Cabell Breckenridge, Quartermaster General I. M. St. John at the Patrick H. Jackson home in Farmville. The three had come by train from Danville, where General Lee's headquarters at Farmville, the hostelry had already entered well over half a century of service as tavern, inn and hotel.

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